

Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

Two Paths, One Way

Scripture: Matthew 7:13-27

Code: 80-312

We're so privileged to turn to the word of God and in this case this morning, to the very words of our Lord Jesus Christ. If you would open your Bible to Matthew chapter 7. At the end of the great Sermon on the Mount, Jesus says, what have to be the most frightening words to religious people of anything he ever said. This is what he said. Matthew 7:21, "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord', will enter the kingdom of heaven." What a statement. "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord Lord', will enter the kingdom of heaven."

He goes on to say, verse 22, "Many will say to me on that day," referring to the day of final judgment, "'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy or preach in your name and in your name cast out demons and in your name perform many miracles?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you. Depart from me you who practice lawlessness.'" The old spiritual put it this way. "Everybody talkin' 'bout heaven ain't goin' there."

Proverbs 30:12 says, "There is a generation who is pure in their own eyes, yet is not washed from their filthiness." Romans 10:2 said, "There are those who have a zeal for God, but not in accordance with knowledge." There are, frankly, millions of people who feel religious, millions of people who associate with Christianity, millions of people who would say to Jesus, "Lord, Lord." And have no hope of entering heaven, millions of people who would proclaim their identification with the Lord Jesus Christ who will spend eternity in hell, suffering everlasting punishment.

In the second chapter of John, our Lord Jesus responded to some superficial believers with rejection. He was in Jerusalem it says in verse 23, "During the feast, many believed in his name, beholding the signs he was doing. But Jesus, on his part, was not entrusting himself to them." Because he knew their hearts and he knew the superficiality of that belief.

It is possible. It is common. It is generally true that the majority of people who acknowledge that they believe in Jesus will never enter heaven. To say nothing of a world of religious people who are in religions other than some form of Christianity. And so I say, there are no more terrifying words to someone associated with Christianity than the words, "Not everyone who says, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter my kingdom."

Now first of all, apart from believing in Jesus Christ, no one will get to heaven. No one. Jesus says in John 14:6, "I am the way, the truth and the light. No man comes to the father but by me."

In Acts 4:12, it says, "Neither is there salvation in any other. There is no other name under heaven whereby we must be saved." That's familiar. John 3:16 says, "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whosoever believes in him shall not perish, but have everlasting life. "Salvation comes to those who confess Jesus as Lord," Romans 10:9 and 10, "And believe in their heart that God raised him from the dead."

There is no hope of heaven for those who do not believe the gospel. That we understand. No gospel, no salvation. No Christ, no salvation. No understanding of the cross and the resurrection, no salvation possible. But, the shocking thing is that even among those who believe and say, "Lord, Lord, we preached in your name, we cast out demons in your name, we did mighty works in your name," there will be those who have no hope of heaven. The shock is that many who call Jesus Lord will be sent by God to eternal hell. This then is a riveting critical passage in a day and a time when lots of people call themselves Christians. That's the popular thing to do in our country. How important, then, is to hear the teachings of our Lord.

To set a context for these words, go back, if you will, to verses 13 and 14. Matthew chapter 7, verses 13 and 14 and listen to the words of Jesus. "Enter by the narrow gate, for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction. And many are those who enter by it. For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life and few are those who find it."

Here is the final call after the greatest sermon recorded in the New Testament, the very well known Sermon on the Mount that occupies chapter 5, chapter 6 and chapter 7. At the conclusion of that sermon, Jesus gives what some would call an invitation. This is not an invitation. In fact, an invitation might be a bad word altogether. Might be a word that a preacher shouldn't have in his vocabulary because an invitation is maybe too refined a word. Maybe it's a little too social a word. Maybe there's too much liberality with the word invitation. Maybe there's too much freedom with the word invitation. Maybe there's not enough power in the word invitation. Better to say that at the close of this sermon, Jesus gave a command.

The command is in verse 13. "Enter by the narrow gate." Every biblical call to the gospel is a command. Repent. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. These are all imperatives, commands, mandates which call for obedience or disobedience, compliance or rebellion. So the Lord ends his sermon with a command and a strong and unmistakable command at that. It is now make up your mind time on the mountain.

In fact, this whole sermon has been a contrast. The whole sermon has been a contrast between true religion and the religion of Judaism. And frankly, between true religion and all other religion, which is one or another form of the same thing.

There are only two possible ways to God - two conceivable ways to God. One involved your work, your effort, your righteousness, your goodness. The other acknowledges that you have none of that which pleases God. It either involves something you do to please God or nothing you do to please God and there can't be any other way. There is no third alternative.

There are only two possible paths to heaven. Either you contribute to your getting there or you don't. Either you bring your righteousness to God and it counts for your salvation to one degree or another, or your righteousness is filthy rags that counts for nothing. So there are only two kinds of religions. Either you can be good enough to contribute to your salvation, or you can't be good enough to contribute to your salvation. Either you have the ability to do something to please God, or you do not have the ability to do anything to please God. That is still the distinction. Only two religions in the world, only two - the religion of divine accomplishment, you can do nothing, God has done it all. That's the true Christian gospel. Or the religion of human achievement, you do something, God does something and together, relatively, you make it to heaven and that's every other religion in the world, but the true one. Even many, many forms of so-called Christianity. The religion of human achievement says that you have things that you can do that please God. Your goodness matters, your religious activity, your ceremonies. This is the religion of works. This is the religion of merit. This is the religion of self-righteousness. This is the religion of the flesh. It involves what we do. Or there is the religion of divine accomplishment which is all of faith, all of grace, and all what God does. And they don't mix. They don't mix.

You put any law in grace, the Bible says in grace is no more grace. You put any grace mingle with the law and you've corrupted law as the standard. It's very confusing to be a legalist. It's very confusing to think you can earn your way to heaven because you know you can't be perfect and so you want to make sure that there's a little cooperating grace there.

But they can't be mixed. It's either all of law or all of grace. And the Bible says, "By the deeds of the law, no one will be justified," Romans 3:20. No one. The Jews of Jesus' day were just part of the worldwide satanic counterfeit religion, the system of human achievement. And Jesus assaulted their religion, attacked their religion.

The amazing thing about Jesus' preaching ministry, particularly in the Sermon on the Mount is he didn't just attack their obvious sins. He did say things about adultery. He did talk about lusting in your heart, committing adultery in your heart. But the essential attack of the Sermon on the Mount, which is meant to totally discredit the religion of human achievement, attacked what they did that they thought merited righteousness before God. He attacked their praying. He attacked their giving. He attacked their service at the temple. He attacked their worship. He attacked the things that they thought, of all things, were unassailable. And that is the point of the Sermon on the Mount. He dismantles their confidence in the religion of human achievement. And he offers them the only true

way to heaven. And that is the religion of divine accomplishment, which says, "I can do absolutely nothing."

That's how the sermon began. "Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." What does that mean? Those who are bankrupt, the word poor means bankrupt. Those who are destitute, those who have no merit, no righteousness, nothing to offer, it is those who are spiritually broken, shattered, crushed, those who therefore mourn over their horrific condition, those who therefore are humble, those who therefore are hungering and thirsting for a righteousness they know they must have and cannot attain. No one gets to heaven by the religion of human achievement. The only way is through divine accomplishment. That is what God has done to save sinners through the work of Jesus Christ in his cross and resurrection.

And so, Jesus contrasts all false religion with the truth. Coming to the end of the sermon, it's time to lay the command before them. It is obvious that this is a two-fold situation because there are two gates, wide and narrow. There are two ways, broad and narrow. There are two destinies, life and destruction. There are two crowds, many and few. In verses 15 to 20 there are two trees, good and corrupt, two fruits, good and bad. And then there are two behaviors, the sayers and the doers, two builders, the wise and the foolish, two foundations, rock and sand, two houses, one stood, one fell. It's a simple contrast that sums up all of religion. It would be hard to imagine a clearer way to depict the choice that everyone has. You either choose the narrow gate or the broad way. There's only two, the narrow gate she is very narrow, very constricted. The broad gate allows for all kinds of religions viewpoints.

One however, is the path to heaven and the other, though marked heaven, is a direct line to hell. Well, let's look at these contrasts, starting in verse 13. First of all, two gates. This is the way to heaven. I'm going to show you what Jesus said about the way to heaven. First of all, two gates. "Enter by the narrow gate for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction. And many are those who enter by it. The gate is small; the way is narrow that leads to life and few are those who find it." Both roads are religious. I say it again, this is not religion and non-religion. This is not Christianity and non-Christianity. This is the true Christianity and then the other form of Christianity as well as any other form of religion. Both roads are religious. Listen. Both promise God. Both promise heaven. Nobody is selling hell. Nobody. "Come join our group, we're all going to hell." Nobody is going into the bedroom and drinking poison to go immediately to hell. Nobody sells hell. Everybody sells heaven. But the broad road, though marked heaven, is a straight line to hell. So the command comes very clearly. "Enter by the narrow gate."

Let's break that down a little bit and understand the true way to heaven, it's spelled out so clearly. First of all, you must enter. It is a command. You must enter. Enter is in the imperative form in the Greek, it is a command, it is a call for an immediate response. It is a command without an alternative. It is a command that must be obeyed and if it is not obeyed, it is then a defiance of the will of God. It

is a consummate, final act of disobedience.

Hell is full of people, by the way, who admire the Sermon on the Mount. Full of people who misinterpret the Sermon on the Mount, think it's some kind of an ethical standard. Hell is full of people who admire Jesus. Hell is full of people and is continually populated by people who admire the idea that Jesus came and even admire that he died and that he rose again. They don't even defy that. They might even associate with Christianity in one form or another. Hell is full of people who admire the things concerning the gospel, but never enter. You must enter. The verb is enter. Doesn't do any good to stand on the outside and admire it.

It is a command to enter and not to enter is disobedience. That is why judgment falls on those, 2 Thessalonians 1:8, "The retribution of God comes to those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. You obey because the gospel is a command. When you share the gospel, you command people to believe. You command people to repent so that it is crystal clear that what they have done is obey or disobey. That's why I say invitation is not a word that is consistent with commanding. Better to finish your sermon with a command than an invitation.

Secondly, not only does Jesus say you must enter, but you must enter this gate. Enter by the narrow gate. That is to say, there is no other way in. This gate and this gate alone - this, of course, is a way of saying that there is no other way except through him. "I am the door," he says in John 10. "I am the light. I am the life. I am the way. I am the truth. No man comes to the father but by me," John 1:12. John writes, "As many as receive him, to them he gave the right to become the children of God even to those who believe in his name."

Only through Christ, there's no salvation in any other than Christ. He alone is the way. In Ephesians chapter one, it says that, "We who were the first to hope in Christ found that in him after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation, having also believed you were sealed in him with the Holy Spirit of promise." It's only when you put your hope in Christ, only when you listen to the message of the truth, the gospel of your salvation and believe that gospel that you are saved and sealed unto eternal life.

Faith comes by hearing the message about Jesus Christ. Faith comes as we said in Romans 10, by confessing Jesus as Lord. There is no other gate. You are saying there is no other redeemer. There is no other savior. There is no other sacrifice for sin. You must enter. It is the command and if you do not obey this command, you will be punished with eternal judgment. You must enter this gate. There is no other gate.

Thirdly, you must enter this gate alone. You must enter this gate alone. The crowd is left behind. This is not a collective experience. We're not saying, "Join a religion." It's not something you're born into or something you join along with other people. This is not a collective experience like joining a religion or

joining a church. You come all alone. The gate is a turnstile and it's a small turnstile. It only admits one at a time. It is exclusive. It is intensely personal.

In fact, you will have to break with friends and family and the crowd which has been your association for all your life until you've arrived at the gate. Jesus said on a number of occasions, you have to be willing to hate your father, your mother, your sister, your brother. You have to be willing to let go of the world, to stop loving the world and all the things that are in the world. You have to understand you're coming through, leaving all your usual company behind. It is not a collective experience. It is an individual, personal experience.

In the fourteenth chapter of Luke and verse 26, "If anyone comes to me and doesn't hate his own father, mother, wife, children, brothers, sisters, even his own life, can't be my disciple." All human relationships have to be set aside no matter how important they are, no matter how critical they are, no matter how normal and natural they are. Spend all your life up to this point running with the crowd. All your life doing what everybody else did. All your life participating in the activities of those around you. You wanted to be popular, you wanted to be accepted, you wanted to be one of the crowd. That's what drove you. Now, you've come all alone.

All the Jews, they thought they were all on the road to heaven because they were Abraham's children, collectively. They thought because they were born out of the loins of Abraham originally that they were all in good graces with God. They thought that because having been born, all the males were circumcised that they had then the sign of the covenant. They thought that because they were Jews and they had this heritage and they had this mark of circumcision and they had received the law of God and were respectful of that law and had collectively followed the testimony of the Old Testament to some degree and carried on the worship of God, that they were fine. Jesus said, essentially what Paul said. It's all manure. It's all manure, rubbish, garbage, filth, meaningless. That's how apostate they were and still are. All that added up to nothing. Paul said, "I had all of that, a Hebrew of the Hebrews, tribe of Benjamin, circumcised the eighth day, zealous for the law, following all of the traditions. It's all rubbish."

But the Jews thought they came collectively. Jesus says, "Oh no. One at a time." So he says, "You must enter. You must enter this gate. You must enter this gate alone."

Number four, you must enter this gate alone with difficulty. It grieves me no end that people try to make this easy. And so they proliferate false conversions. Notice what it says in verse 14, end of the verse. "The gate that's narrow and small, that leads to life, is found by few. Few are those who find it." It's difficult. The implication here is that it's hard to find. It's, to start with, hard to find this gate. I would agree with that. I absolutely would agree with that.

How many churches do you have to go into if you just started thirty miles the other end of this valley and stopped at all the churches along Roscoe Boulevard before you found the way in? How many religious buildings would you have to go in? How many religious teachers would you have to listen to before you found somebody who told you the truth about the way into the kingdom of God, the way to heaven? How many? It is a search.

It can be, for people, an agonizing search. Sunday night after Sunday night we hear in the waters of baptism in this church people say, "I was dissatisfied and I was trying to find the answer and I went into this and I went into that and I went there and I listened to this and I tried that." It's a desperate, desperate search.

The enemy of men's souls, Satan, the archenemy of God, has created so many false systems of religion filled the world with so many false teachers and false gospels that, first of all, it's hard to find the truth. It's hard to find it. Even when you've found the Bible, if you're holding that Bible and you're under the influence of a false teacher, he'll teach you something that is not true about that very Bible which you hold. Hard to find.

Let me go beyond that. It's not only difficult because it's hard to find. But it's difficult because when you've found it, it's very hard to go through. Very hard. Luke 13:24, listen to what Jesus said, "Strive to enter by the narrow door." What an amazing statement. Strive is agonize. Agonize to enter by the narrow door. You say, "Wait a minute. If this is the way to heaven, if the sign says heaven, whoa, I finally found it. I found somebody to show me the true way through Jesus Christ in him alone. And I'm there. Well, why is it so hard? Why do I have to agonize?"

Jesus went on to say in that same verse, "Many, many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able." They'll get there. They'll find it. They'll understand it. They will seek to enter and never be able to enter. Wow. It's hard to get in. It's difficult. Even when you've heard the truth, it's difficult to embrace that truth to make a commitment to that truth.

It's not an easy thing. That's why Matthew 11:12 says this. "The kingdom of heaven suffers violence and the violent take it by force." What an amazing statement. It's for the violent. It's for people who seize it. It's not for the passive. It's not for the weak and the marginal and the indifferent.

Luke 16:16 says, when it comes to entering through the narrow door, every man presses into it. It's the picture of violence, of effort, of agonizing. And a lot of people fall by the wayside and never get through. Why is it so hard to get through? Because, Isaiah 55:7 puts it this way, "Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous his thoughts." Whoa. What it means is you leave the old self behind. That's hard. All your self-determination, all your ambition, all your self-will, all your sovereignty over your own life, all your sense of your own goodness, all your own dreams and ambitions.

It's exactly what Jesus said in Luke 9:23 when he said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself." It isn't that Jesus is going to add something to your life and fulfill your little success patterns. It's the end of you. It's suicide. It's I'm done, I die from now on, Christ lives.

This is what Jeremiah meant in Jeremiah 29:13. He said this, "You will seek me and you will find me when you search for me with all your heart." There's a violence. There's a seizing. There's an agonizing. As your flesh hangs onto your sin, hangs onto your pride, hangs onto your worldliness, it's with difficulty, very great - the rich ___ ruler comes to Jesus, "What do I do to receive eternal life?" Jesus said, "Take all your assets, sell them, get the cash, give it all to the poor." What? Why did he tell him that? Jesus was establishing whether or not this man was aggressive enough to enter the kingdom, whether he was ready to seize it, take it by force, to agonize into it, to do the struggle that needed to be done to enter. And he walked away and said, "Not on your life. I want my money. I want my self-determination. I want to do with what's mine what I want to do. And I'm not submitting to you." The idea was Jesus was just surfacing whether or not he would submit his life to his Lordship. He wasn't about to deny himself. He wasn't about to die to himself. He wasn't about to abandon everything and submit himself fully to Christ.

So this gate is only entered by the serious and the zealous and the wholehearted and the passionate and the eager and the desperate. There's a certain spiritual violence. You see it in Luke 18 with the publican pounding his chest, "God, be merciful to me, sinner." There's agonizing there. And he's trusting in the savior and only in the savior. You're coming and saying, "I have no other hope. I let go of all other hopes. I let go of all religion, all ceremony, all pride, all self-righteousness. I abandoned myself. I am that desperate."

Number five, you must enter, you must enter this gate, you must enter this gate alone, you must enter this gate with difficulty and you must enter this gate naked. I use that metaphorically to mean you can't go through a turnstile with your luggage. The tiny little turnstile will not accommodate you and your junk, your baggage. This is a gate for those who have dropped everything. Self-denial, take up your cross, that's all you can carry through is just a small cross on which you might be crucified if the Lord determines that it will serve his glory that you die as a martyr. This is what Jesus was talking about in John 12:25 when he said, "The one who comes to be his disciple must hate his own life or he can't be my disciple." What do you mean hate his own life? His own life as defined by his sinfulness, his fallenness, his pride, his self-righteousness, his iniquity.

This is what Jesus meant in the parables of the treasure in the field and the pearl of great price in Matthew 13. In each story, the point is very simple, a man finds a treasure, he sells everything, puts it all in the treasure. Man finds a pearl, he sells everything, puts all his fortune in the pearl. But the point is this, when you come to salvation, which is the pearl and salvation which is the treasure, you liquidate everything. All selfishness, all sin, all self-righteousness, you come bankrupt, empty,

shattered, poor, meek, mourning, hungry, thirsty.

This is repentance. You come not only to confess that this is the only way Jesus is the only savior, not only with difficulty because you're now going to submit your whole life to his Lordship, but with penitence or recognition of your own spiritual emptiness. You are so desperate to be on the way to heaven, so desperate to be rescued from hell and eternal torment that you will gladly cry out to be delivered from sin.

All of this is implied in this command. There's a big cost involved here. That's why in Luke 14, Jesus essentially said you have to understand what you're getting into here. This isn't just about raising your hand and praying a little prayer and now you're on your way to heaven. This costs you everything.

In the fourteenth chapter of Luke, Jesus again uses the same language, if someone comes to me, it involves hating his family if necessary, hating his own life, carrying his cross. And he says, this is so extreme that you better calculate it like a man who calculates whether he has enough money to build a tower before he start, or like a man who's gonna go to war with somebody, he calculates the troops and whether he's got enough to withstand the onslaught and win the victory. You've got a lot at stake here. Your life and your eternal destiny is at stake. Count the cost. And this is the cost. And if you decide to hold onto your life, Luke 9 says, you'll lose it forever. If you decide to lose it, you'll find it forever.

Salvation is never marketed by Jesus as cheap and easy. Contrast with that the wide gate. "For the gate is wide." That's all it says. "The gate is wide." Easy to find. Marked heaven with a big, big sign. Easy to enter, you can come on in with everybody else. It's a collective experience. Join their religion. All the religious are getting on there. You can bring all your baggage on there, you don't have to drop anything, no self-denial. Bring your pride, bring your sin, bring your self-righteousness. No call for repentance. No commitment to a life of obedience to Christ. Just roll on with the crowd. Easy. Sign here, raise your hand, do this, join the religion, follow the crowd. And again, this is marked heaven. Just doesn't get there.

So there are two gates. Secondly, there are two ways. Two ways. Please notice again verse 13, it says, "The way is broad through the wide gate." And verse 14 says, "The way is narrow through the small gate." The broad way, what does that mean? Well, it's easy to get on, you come on with the crowd, you don't have to drop anything, no repentance, no submission to Christ, no call to obedience, no call to holiness, no call to sacrifice, no cross to bear, no self denial, you just roll on with all the crowd and we're all going to heaven because we're all religious and we talk about God and we - there's plenty of room for diverse doctrine. In fact, doctrine shouldn't be even an issue. That'll just divide us and we all want to be happy rolling along on the broad way. Plenty of room for tolerance, tolerance of this view, that view, any view. Why, after all, who knows what the Bible means? So obscure, you can all have your own opinion of interpreting it. Plenty of tolerance for sin. No curbs, no

boundaries, no fences, no walls. All the desires of the fallen heart are tolerated, there's plenty of place for pride and self righteousness and ambition. All the hypocrites as well as the deceived are on that road.

But as Psalm 1:6 says, "The way of the ungodly will perish." By the way, there are ticket sellers for the broad road. They're everywhere. You can buy tickets all over the place. It's very hard to find someone who will direct you to the narrow gate, very easy to find the ticket sellers to the broad road. They're all over the place. And there's a warning about them in verse 15. "Beware of the false prophets." They're selling you the tickets to hell. But they're marked heaven. They dress up in sheep's clothing, that's wool, right? Sheep are clothed in wool and wool was the garment of a prophet. They dress like a prophet, but inside, they are wolves. They want to rip and shred and tear you for their own personal gain. The truth of them is revealed in verses 16 to 20. They are producers of bad, corrupt fruit. You ought to look real close to see what kind of life they live. Cause false doctrine cannot restrain sin.

So there are two ways. There is that broad way, but also the narrow way. "The way is narrow," it says in verse 14. It means pressed, constricted, confining. It's like the gate and what do you mean it's narrow? Well, this is how you live your life, according to Matthew 28:19 and 20, "All things whatsoever I have commanded you." It is a life of obedience to the word of God. That's why you count the cost. You come through the narrow gate stripped and bare and you continue to walk this very confined, compressed, narrow, narrow way, calling for complete obedience to the word of God. Don't even think about coming in unless your heart is crying out with a love for God and the love for his law and the longing to obey.

Thirdly, there are two destinations. Two destinations, the broad road leads to destruction. The narrow leads to life. Destruction doesn't refer to annihilation, but it refers to everlasting torment whether it's weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth forever and ever and ever. It leads to hell, as I said all along, it says heaven, but it goes to hell and the entrance to hell is from a road marked heaven.

That's Satan's great lie. But the narrow road leads to life. Life in the fullest sense, eternal life, heavenly life, eternal everlasting joy and bliss.

Fourthly, there are two crowds. Easily identified, verse 13, the broad road is occupied by many, "Many are those who enter by it." "The narrow road," end of verse 14, "few are those who find it." Two crowds, the many and the few. Most of the people are on the broad road. The broad road encompasses all religion, the narrow only true believers. Luke 12:32, and Jesus said, "Fear not, little flock." And in Luke 13:23, someone said to Jesus, observing how that he was rejected by the whole nation and only a few were true followers, he said to him, "Are only a few being saved?" Yes. Only a few.

Matthew 22:14, "Many are called but few chosen." There's just a few. But on the broad road, masses of people, masses. By the way, the many show up again in verse 22. "Many are those who are on the broad way," says verse 13. Then on verse 22, "Many," oh there they are again, "Many will say to me on that day," the day of final judgment, here are the many, when they all show up at the final judgment. Here are the many who show up at the great white throne judgment. Many. And they're gonna say, "Wait a minute. We call you Lord. We did preaching in your name and casting out demons in your name and miracles in your name." Here are the many. There will be few in heaven compared to the many in hell.

The many and the few are characterized by two behaviors, number five - two behaviors. Look at verse 21. "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord', will enter the kingdom of heaven. But he who does the will of my father who's in heaven," it's the difference between the sayers and the doers. That's right. It's the difference between the sayers and the doers, the behavior of saying does you no good. They are empty words spoken out of empty hearts. They represent no true repentance, no true faith, no true love for the Lord, no interest in obedience. But it sounds good, "Lord, Lord." They say it twice for effect, expressing a measure of zeal. "Lord," in the sense that it's polite, respectful. "Lord," in the sense that it's orthodox and fundamental and it's an affirmation of deity.

Three times in verse 22, "In *your* name," and emphasis on the word your, "In *your* name," the you emphatic each time. "In *your* name, in *your* name." Wait a minute. We, we're in your group, to which he says, "I never knew you. Depart from me, you who practice lawlessness."

There's the issue. It's not what you say, it's what you do. If you do the will of the father as revealed in the word, if you practice righteousness, then you give evidence of belonging to him and knowing him. So many people claiming to serve the Lord. So many people claiming power over demons, claiming to preach words from God, claiming to do miracles. These are only claims. This is not the true power of God. He has no relationship to them. So it's a counterfeit power. It's a deception, it's a hoax, it's a lie. Or, in some cases, it's of Satan.

So everybody's eternal destiny is gonna be based on not what they say, but what they do - not on what you claim, but on whether or not your claim is supported by a life of obedience and love toward God and Christ. Hell is filled with people who will claim a relationship with the Lord.

"I never knew you." By the way, this claim is a kind of blasphemy. We talk about the command in the Old Testament, do not take the Lord's name in vain. When we think about using the name of God or Jesus as a curse word, for people who claim to be Christians, that's something we don't do. We're kind of shaken by that. We don't take the Lord's name in vain, at least I hope we don't, although, I've been reading lately about a new kind of fad with some pastors to use cuss words in their preaching. But that's new. It's pretty typical for us not to do that.

But there's a worse profanity than that, worse than just using the name of God as a curse word, using it in a profane way is claiming to speak for God when you don't, claiming to preach for God when you don't, claiming to work for God when you don't. That is the blasphemy of the sanctuary which is worse than the blasphemy of the slum, of the street. That's a Judas Kiss, "Lord, Lord." That's worse than somebody using the Lord's name in vain, but making no claim to speak for him. The blasphemy of the sanctuary is far, far worse. And so the Lord says to them, "I don't know you." With the words of Jeff O'Hara, we pull it together. He wrote this. "Why call me, Lord, Lord and do not the things I say? You call me the way and walk me not? You call me the life and live me not? You call me master and obey me not? If I condemn you, blame me not. You call me bread and eat me not? You call me truth and believe me not? You call me Lord and serve me not? If I condemn you, blame me not."

Two gates, two ways, two destinations, two crowds, two behaviors, all of this is illustrated in a final illustration with some more comparisons. Two foundations - two foundations - just quickly verse 24, "Therefore, everyone who hears these words of mine and acts upon them," that would be the one who is a doer, "may be compared to a wise man who built his house upon the rock. And the rain descended and the floods came and the winds blew and burst against that house. And yet it didn't fall for it had been founded upon the rock. And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not act upon them will be like a foolish man who built his house upon the sand. And the rain descended and the floods came and the winds blew and burst against that house and it fell. And great was its fall."

So finally you have two foundations, two houses, and two results. One foundation rock solid, built on these words of mine. Being heard and acted upon - obedience to the word of God demonstrating a righteous life. And the other one is hearing these words of mine, but not acting upon them. That is a house built on sand. You can't see the foundation. Luke 6:47 and 48, Jesus said, "The first man dug deep." But you can't see that. You look at the house, here's a religious house, here's a religious house. They look the same. The same storm hits both. You can't tell where the foundation lies until the storm has passed. The storm is judgment, divine judgment and when judgment comes, only a life built on obedience to the word of God, which begins with obeying the gospel command to enter through Christ, will stand.

One built the hard way, one builds the easy way. One is superficial, one is deep. One is in a hurry, the other desires to build right. The storm of judgment will reveal everything.

I hope you can say with the hymn writer, "My house is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness. I dare not trust the sweetest frame, but wholly lean on Jesus' name." And that great chorus, "On Christ, the solid rock I stand. All other ground is sinking sand."

In closing you say, "I'm not sure where I am. I'm not sure." Can I take you back to verse 7? What do I do? What do, I do? You've shown me the narrow door. What do I do to get through? Verse 7, Jesus said this, "Ask and it shall be given to you. Seek and you shall find. Knock and it shall be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives. And he who seeks, finds. And to him who knocks, it shall be opened." That's it. Ask, seek, knock. Get on your faiths, God, be merciful to me, a sinner. Give me the repentance, the regeneration, the conversion, the spiritual power to come through that narrow gate and enter the true and only path to heaven.

Father we pray that prayer this morning for all who are here who are hearing this message. Oh God, may you give them the power to do what they have no strength in themselves to do, that is to enter into your kingdom through the narrow gate. We ask, we seek, we knock knowing you've promised to answer. For this grace and power we plead, for desperate seeking sinners who are seeking with all their hearts. May your spirit do the mighty work, the necessary work of violence to pull them through that narrow gate as they ask like that publican, beating his chest, "Lord, be merciful to me a sinner." Give this entrance to sinners by your mercy for Jesus' sake, amen.

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